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THE WRITTEN LEAVES.

A STORY OF THE NEW YEAR.

AND

OTHER HOLIDAY STORIES.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE

WRITTEN LEAVES

A STORY OF THE NEW YEAR

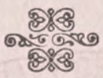
AND

OTHER HOLIDAY STORIES

BY

BELLE BELLEVILLE

N Evansville Ind



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THE WRITTEN LEAVES

A STORY OF THE NEW YEAR

THE WRITTEN LEAVES.

A STORY OF THE NEW YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

At the witching hour of twelve, when the Old Year departs, and the New Year descends silently and unseen upon the earth, they pause upon the portals of Life, and of Death.

As the New Year merrily greets the Old, the Old Year murmurs a sad farewell; and amid the chime of their voices, the Old Year to the New Year, passes The Book of Life.

On one occasion, at the passing of the Old Year; it chanced, that when the wind arose to waft the portals closed, it was most unkindly nipped by King Frost; and becoming boisterous, almost snatched The Book of Life.

For a moment, it was in imminent danger of falling upon the earth; but with the tenacity of

new life, the fingers of the young year closed tightly upon it. But not too quickly, for many leaves were scattered; and drifted softly among the snowflakes, to the earth.

They fell at the feet of a Philosopher, who was out in his garden, observing the state of the weather; and mentally casting the horoscope of the New Year. "If, just on the eve of the New Year—aye, of the year 1893—the civilization of the world, has not advanced further,—than it has."— Here his cogitations were interrupted, by what seemed to be unusually large drifts of snow, flying through the air. His senses were quickly on the alert, for the scientific consideration of the phenomenon.

He looked up at the sky. As it gave no response to his inquiries, he looked to the earth; and lo! at his feet, lay many Written Leaves.

He gathered them up hastily, and as he entered the house, the bells ceased chiming; and the year 1893 had entered upon its career.

All the house was still, the lights were out, the fire burned low. All humanity seemed to slumber. A strange sleepiness overcame Fortunatus; for, as he touched the Leaves from The Book of Life, he became amenable to its laws.

Morpheus softly closed his eyelids, and smiled; to think how often this same philosopher, Fortunatus,—had rebelled against the decrees of life.

CHAPTER II.

The day came fitfully, and uncertain. Aurora was loth to saunter forth. Boreas blew his trumpets loud and strong. The snow would fain cover the earth with a white mantle, the rain would fall in a bounteous shower. But King Frost changed it into a glittering sheen.

The first to arise in the household of Fortunatus, was Apollo. His face was as clouded as the sky, for this was not the day of his

imagining. Had he not planned it, fair and bright; in golden light? And now, his visions were frozen by the chilled air.

He descended to the library, to seek consolation from Fortunatus. The fire was burning brightly, and lit the room, but it was vacant. He looked gloomily out of the window at the drizzling rain and flurrying snow, and then turned to the glowing fire. As he gazed idly into it, he started. He found himself musing, upon the same thoughts that had occupied his mind for many years. But yesterday, he had vowed to cast them to the winds; yet the wretched day had chained him to the past. But the year was new, and the thoughts of every one should receive a new impetus.

He turned, and walked across the room and back again, and then stood before the mantel, looking at a superb copy of Guido's Aurora. He had been familiar with the picture from childhood; yet, it always possessed the same fascination for him. As he gazed upon it, his

day became one of unclouded light. As the fire met his glance, he remembered that for those bright rays, unto Prometheus, should be rendered thanks.

Thus he had defied the gods, to serve mortals; and by the gods he was chained eternally.

"Oh! Myths," he exclaimed, "mortals were ever slaves to them." But these myths, were his heritage by grace of name. For was he not Apollo? and so a god among gods? and yet a mortal among mortals? and as such, he would strive to destroy the illusion of all gods.

And as Prometheus, he would be chained,—not by gods, but by mortals,—to rocks of Solitude. And the waves he would hear ever dashing, would be the surging of the voices of mortals, ever vibrating,—and the whirr of vulture-wings, that would fly above his head, would be the echo of adverse opinions, resounding in the air. He was powerless to

decree, that wisdom should ever reign supreme. But there was one hope. The hope that old errors being dead, mortals would, themselves become immortal. And then Life—Life forevermore.

As Apollo paced the room, looking at and seeing nothing but his own thoughts; he passed and repassed the table, upon which lay the precious Leaves from The Book of Life. At last he impetuously flung open the door, and departed into the darkness of the world.

But he illumined his pathway, wherever he went. When in his presence, many fancied that the cares of life were lightened; and those who were long in his company, felt them depart as if they had wings; and they were forgotten. He was well called Apollo. His hair had caught the gleam of the sun; and upon his cheek, rested the rosy tint of morn.

CHAPTER III.

Fortunatus had at first, slept the deep sleep of forgetfulness. That sleep, in which cares and sorrows are unknown.

But soon the nymphs of Dreamland, hovered around him; and before him, he ever saw The Written Leaves. One moment, the inscriptions were in Sanscrit; and the next, they appeared in the form of Egyptian Hieroglyphics. But most often, the letters were illuminated. One instant, they would seem to glow brightly, almost revealing a sentence; and then, fade from sight.

At last, he read one line. It was this: "Read thou the Truth,"—and he awoke,—in the broad daylight.

CHAPTER IV.

Apollo had not left the library many minutes, when Fortunatus entered. He had awakened late. His dream had impressed him, but he had thought it all but a dream, and—had dismissed it from his mind. For the night, he had often argued, was the time for rest; and people should sleep without dreaming. For only the perplexities and anxieties of the day, caused dreams.

He came into the library calmly, and as he stopped near the door, to settle his spectacles more firmly on his nose; his dream was vividly recalled to his mind. He walked to the window, and looked sternly out. He was solving a problem. Why should he, who so seldom dreamed,—(and when he did his dreams were of the most reasonable character)—why should he, have had such a fanciful dream? He could think of no cause for it. This quite destroyed

his theories, and the arguments he had used, in that Essay which he had published upon "The Cause of Dreams." If he remembered rightly, a certain clause ran so — but he would verify it; and he stepped to the book shelves, and took out a small volume entitled—"The Cause and Effect of Dreams."

It ran thus: "Any person of good judgment, and analytical mind, could easily trace the cause of a dream. And such a one, would not allow dreams, to have the least effect upon thoughts or actions. Dreams could easily be classed under three heads. They were caused—First, by some piece of work that had been done during the day, or on some previous day. Second, something that had been read, or which had been heard. Third, the contemplation of some action to be performed, or some event which was anticipated." He believed that to be true when he wrote it, and it still seemed reasonable. He glanced over two or three pages, and then replaced the book. His search was

unsatisfactory, and he decided to make a note of the occurrence. He sat down by the table to write, and the first object his eyes fell upon, was—The Written Leaves from The Book of Life.

Ah! he remembered it all then, it was plain. So, his conclusions were not wrong. Yes, these were the same Leaves that he had found in the garden. He would have known them anywhere by the touch, even if he could not have seen them. The texture was rather peculiar. It was hardly like ordinary paper; however, that could be examined hereafter. Now for the contents. And he settled himself comfortably in his chair, for their perusal. He had read for some minutes, when his eyes brightened, and his cheeks almost regained the color of youth.

The retrospective, philosophical look, left his eyes as he read eagerly.

Did those leaves hold the word of Life?

When he had finished reading, the door opened, and closed quietly. Fortunatus re-

arranged the Leaves, as he said: "Niece, here are some Written Leaves, which I found in the garden last night. I have read them, and their contents are quite wonderful. Indeed, most astonishing. I here find valuable knowledge recorded. I will quote from them, in my book upon Mind and Matter. Strange! that I am unable to find the name of the author! But they are only some stray leaves, and the owner will soon be inquiring for them. I know of no one in the city, who could have written so finely and so clearly."

"But Uncle, do you not remember, that to-day the Prehistoric Society has a meeting which you promised to attend?"

"I had forgotten it. I will first make a few notes."

"But you will not have time. You know that the distance is great, and the morning is almost gone."

"Ah! is it so late? I am expected to read a paper, upon a most important subject,—'The

Influence of History upon Civilization.' I will now go. In the meanwhile, you must read these Written Leaves. I have not read any thing that gave me more satisfaction for many a day."

CHAPTER V.

The inmates of the house of a Philosopher, are more or less affected by the philosophical atmosphere, and their ideas are apt to be clouded. They can not decide upon the truly exact way of viewing the universe.

The members of the household of Fortunatus, were all sure, that the affairs of this world were entirely out of its orbit; but could easily be swung into place again, if his or her theories were followed. But their opinions were all different, and no greater pleasure could be experienced by each one of them, than to point out to the others, the fallacies of their respective views.

When Fortunatus had left the room, Sappho replenished the fire; and drawing an easy chair beside it, began to read the precious Leaves.

As she read, her face shone with pleasure. When she had finished, the gleam of a smile lingered on her lips, and she sat musing. But not for long, for the spell was broken. The door opened, and Apollo entered.

Sappho arose, and greeting him pleasantly, her face all smiles, she said: "Have you read these Written Leaves? You will find them interesting. And I am glad to tell you, that I am entirely right in all my opinions.

Apollo—I am well aware that you think so, but you can never prove the truth of them. Your arguments are all false.

Sappho—I do not ask you now, to listen to me. Here, in these Written Leaves, is the evidence that I am right. Read for yourself, and be convinced,—that it is you, and your ideas of life,—that are all wrong. In these Written

Leaves, lie charms most potent, that will loose the chains which bind your reason. So farewell, 'til eventide.

"Stay, O stay, dearest Sappho!" implored Apollo. But the door closed, and he was left alone with the Leaves from The Book of Life.

He stood looking at them, yet hardly seeing them. He was reluctant to abandon his own thoughts, to read those of another. He unconsciously touched them, and that touch was electrical. In one moment, he was deeply absorbed.

CHAPTER VI.

Though the air was chill, and the wind blew the snow-flakes backward and forward, and mostly upward,—as if to force them to return from whence they came,—about the table upon which lay the Leaves from The Book of Life, a slight golden mist hovered. It was of the same character as the light that always

surrounded Apollo. When he was among a number of people, this light was more perceptible. To all, it was not visible; and it seemed to those who saw it, to be but a reflection of his own sunny temper.

Would The Written Leaves reveal the mystery of Life? Would they cause him to solve its many problems?

When Apollo had read them, he laid them carefully before him; and drawing from the portfolio some paper, he began writing. He wrote rapidly, page after page, as if the thoughts crowded one upon another.

One disturbing air,—a voice, a word spoken,—will send a thought astray; and the golden chain of which our fancies are the shining links, is severed.

But the silence was unbroken. The minutes became hours, and yet Apollo wrote.

Suddenly the pen wavered. It was raised, and as Apollo held it poised in air, the sun

shone out triumphantly, and threw its rays into his eyes; blinding him for the moment.

The room was full of sunshine. He soon realized, that the day was fast declining; and that the sun, ere it sank beneath the horizon, had given the light of its blessing to the earth.

His task was done. In its completion he rejoiced. At last, the least atom of doubt was removed from his mind.

The day had not been so disagreeable after all. The sunlight to Apollo, had never seemed more golden. He looked fondly at the Written Leaves. They were as a gift from the New Year. He wondered where Sappho had found them; and gathering his manuscript together, he went in search of her.

He would read to Sappho, and to Fortunatus, what he had written. Sappho, at least, must acknowledge that her ideas were entirely false. And thus engrossed in his own cogitations, he entirely forgot The Written Leaves from The Book of Life.

CHAPTER VII.

Although The Written Leaves were neglected, and overlooked upon the earth; the New Year had bemoaned their loss all through the day, and had busily searched for them. For they must be replaced in The Book of Life, ere the sun went down.

The New Year did not know upon what portion of the earth they had fallen.

The hour for the setting of the sun had almost come. The last beams were shining, but not so brightly as before. They were slowly, but surely fading. They lingered longest, upon the table where lay The Written Leaves.

The sun's last ray sank from sight, and soon Jove's thunderbolts smote the air in anger. For the sun had descended, and the Leaves had not been restored to The Book of Life.

The room was deserted by all visible forms; but the Fates had abided all through the day,

and had watched over the Leaves from The Book of Life. And now, the day had gone, and they had not yet woven the warp.

It would indeed, be a new era. And they departed into the gloom.

CHAPTER VIII.

The lamps were lighted, the curtains closely drawn, to banish the darkness from sight. Beneath the swinging lamp, sat Apollo and Sappho. They were discussing the Leaves from The Book of Life. Sappho had related, how that Fortunatus had found them; and there had been many speculations, as to how they had come, and from whence.

Sappho at last said: "As we can not penetrate the mystery, suppose that you tell me your opinion of the contents—of the conclusions drawn. Did they not show you the fallacy of your own views?"

"Not in the least. They only strengthened me. After I had read The Written Leaves, I wrote down the new thoughts suggested."

"Where is your manuscript?"

"I laid it here while you were singing." Apollo took from the top of a small case of books, the manuscript. In the case, were choice editions of the poets. On it stood Poesy, who watched over the books which she had inspired. In this room often lingered Sappho, dividing her time between poetry and music.

Apollo unrolled his manuscript and began reading.

* * * * * * *

Sappho—It is perfect. You must call it "The Victory of the Soul." Yet, Apollo, the Soul will always seek for knowledge of the haven for which it is bound.

Apollo—Wherefore? Is the earth not fair, containing all that is bright and beautiful? I see that you are still of your old opinions. I thought that after reading those Written Leaves,

you must change your views. Have you not found reason to do so?

Sappho replied firmly, "No," and then hesitated, and over her face flitted a look of surprise and inquiry; but before she could complete the sentence, Fortunatus came into the room. His face was aglow, and his voice had a pleasant ring, as he said, "Why, Apollo, were you not at the meeting of the Prehistoric Society?"

Apollo—I forgot it entirely.

Fortunatus—Forgot it! You missed a most enjoyable feast. The discussions to-day, were unusually animated. The remarks of Dr. Faustus were particularly good in regard to our prehistoric friends.

Apollo—You do not mean to say, that you have just returned from that meeting?

Fortunatus—Yes. It is late, but it was the anniversary of the day upon which the Society was founded; and there was much to be done. We examined our previous work—all positive

proofs—and laid out a scheme of work for the coming year. It was decided that our field of action should lie entirely in America. Dr. Faustus inquired for you, and said that you had quite deserted the Society. He called my attention to the fact that you had not attended during the year.

Apollo—I have lost my interest in the prehistoric man. It is the welfare of the humanity of to-day, that occupies my thoughts.

Fortunatus—Yes, yes. I know. That has been your line for sometime. But that is a matter of time, or accident. No laws or plans can be made for the future race. However, we will discuss that some other day. This Prehistoric Society is of great importance, and deserves your attention. The members do not pursue their investigations idly.

Apollo looked up and smiled, as he said: "Then they have changed their basis."

Fortunatus—Yes, somewhat. They hope to find traces of the existence of man in the be-

ginning. The evidences all prove that Darwin and Wallace were right, and every day brings new testimony to the value of their discovery.

Apollo—Yet I can not but think that an undue importancc is given to the theory, in the endeavor to make it fit every condition of the past, present, and future life. It has not yet fulfilled all that is required of it. It has not explained the descent of the soul. A race of men evolved by that method, would possess no souls.

Fortunatus—There are many men who have no souls. A common type, and they have but little mind. Their actions are merely the result of instinct and imitation, and they are incapable of reasoning. Such a race of men, could have been evolved. Yet at the same period, another type may have lived, distinct in many particulars; and in time they may have merged into each other. Thus the everlasting conflict among people.

Here the remarks of Fortunatus were rather

abruptly closed, by a note that was brought to him. He arose, saying: "I promised to send Faustus a book, and now he wants it immediately," and he left the room. Sappho and Apollo soon resumed their converse.

Apollo—Sappho, I am right. This everlasting murmur of why and wherefore, is a curse. You know my interest in the welfare of all humanity. My great wish that misery should be banished from the world; so that at least during the little while that people sojourn here, happiness should be the common lot.

Sappho—That day, I fear, will never come. Each person is too selfishly engrossed in his or her own affairs.

Fortunatus returned too soon for Apollo and Sappho. He immediately inquired of Sappho if she had read The Written Leaves.

Sappho—Yes, and I gave them to Apollo; and he has also read them.

Fortunatus—What did you think of them? What was your opinion?

Apollo—They were remarkable, and certainly very lucid. They suggested to me new thoughts, or, rather, they threw a new light upon the old ones.

Fortunatus—You are right. That was their peculiar characteristic. I,—who have made a lifelong study of the relation that Mind bears to Matter,—was never more enlightened upon the subject than I have been to-day. I shall now, to my entire satisfaction, finish my book upon Mind and Matter.

Apollo—I did not think that they bore upon that subject.

Fortunatus looked sternly at Apollo, as Sappho gave him the manuscript; telling him to read what Apollo had written, and then sit in judgment. While Fortunatus was reading, Sappho and Apollo sang their favorite airs. Sappho glanced backward now and then, to see how far Fortunatus had read. As he came to the last pages, they left the piano for the fireside, and waited for his comments.

Holding the manuscript still in his hand, and tapping it slightly, he began: "This is rather fanciful. You should remember that the subject is worn out. No scientific man will be interested in it. And it is a question, whether some belief is not better than none, until the mind is formed."

Apollo—It is just while the mind is growing, that the belief in any supernatural power, is so deleterious. It destroys, or delays, the perfecting of the mind.

Fortunatus—That is a knotty point, which only time can decide. It is a fact, that it matters little, what the religion of the mass of the people is,—if they are satisfied with it,—and will not attempt to make others think as they do. But there lies the trouble—the wish that they all have to compel their friends and acquaintances to think as they do. It should be realized, that a religion is merely an individual interest or opinion; and that it can not concern the world at large. You know, that if in any

age, a man arises, who, disinterestedly and unselfishly, devotes his time and energies to the people; he is never thanked, and is seldom remembered. His labors are never regarded, and he is always imposed upon. Throwing yourself headlong into the chasm, will not bridge it over. So rest contented. The only point that can be urged, is scientific education.

Apollo—But I am not a philosopher, so I still hope,—though perhaps in vain.

Fortunatus—Mere fancy, my boy, mere fancy. You must come to facts.

Apollo—Facts? What are facts?

Fortunatus—Facts are as foundation stones. They are always in position.

Apollo—How long? Until philosophy analyzes them into atoms?

Sappho—Uncle, you see that Apollo will soon deny the existence of atoms, and then you know that Apollo is lost.

Fortunatus—Yes, truly. And we have drifted far from our subject. I can not imagine, Apollo,

what you read in those Written Leaves, that could have suggested such thoughts. I also made a few notes, which you may read.

Fortunatus drew from his pocket a notebook, and finding the place, passed it to Apollo,—who, when he had finished reading, returned it,—saying: "Surely, there was nothing in The Written Leaves that could cause any one to write upon that subject."

Fortunatus gave the book to Sappho to read; wiped his spectacles, took a turn across the room, and resumed his chair, saying: "Certainly, I could have made no mistake. The Written Leaves were very clear, as well as strongly expressed; and evidently the work of a master mind."

Apollo—Perhaps you were pressed for time, and did not read them attentively.

Fortunatus—I assure you, I read them carefully; and I can not understand why it is, that we are not agreed in regard to the subject.

They appeared to me, to deal entirely with the problem of Mind and Matter.

Sappho returned the notebook to Fortunatus, and sighing, said: "It seems to me, that you both misunderstood the purport of The Written Leaves."

Fortunatus looked searchingly at her, as if expecting to see her thoughts, and said: "You remember their contents?"

Sappho—Yes, they were certainly different from the subject of Apollo's manuscript. Neither did they dwell upon the subject which you have treated.

Fortunatus—Indeed, that is most strange. Well, the point is easily settled. Where are The Written Leaves?

They all went to the library, and stepped forward eagerly. Upon the table lay the Leaves from The Book of Life. But they were as spotless as the snow. As they silently gazed upon them, Fortunatus raised them one by one, and then said; "These are the Leaves, but where

are the words?" pausing, as if he sought answer from Apollo and Sappho.

The words were no more.

Fortunatus—I must examine into this. Bring me my strongest magnifying glass.

They all in turn, looked at The Written Leaves, but not a trace of a word could be found upon them.

Fortunatus—They have disappeared. And you, Apollo,—wrote what they inspired you to write; and I,—jotted down some of the principal thoughts which they aroused in my mind. And you, Sappho,—also read The Written Leaves. Now tell us what you read.

Sappho—You both read them, and know that they were wonderful. Yet, as I think of them now, they seem so woven in with my own beliefs and cherished ideas, that I hesitate,—surely the words must reappear, they can not be lost, faded from sight so soon.

Fortunatus—Yet you see that they are gone.

Sappho—Too true. And now, I can only tell you what I remember.

"Humanity, should be the watchword of every one. There are, implanted in the breast of each human being, all of the most noble traits. Love of justice, mercy, and peace,—principles of the true, the good, and the beautiful; the arts, poetry, and music. These are the safeguards, which ever protect and guide. But upon these, the Fates ever frown. They destroy when they are able, the first dawn of intelligence; and when they fail, they pervert the powers which would lead to perfection.

"People should not be taught to fear death, nor in life to prepare for it; but rather to prepare for life. Not by each person selfishly valuing the individual life above those by whom they are surrounded, but by seeking the happiness of all. For no life can depend upon the life of another. It is complete, and perfect in itself. People wish for happiness, and think to gain it from the lives of others, but in vain.

Happiness, lies only in the exercise of the faculties which come with every life; and which, if allowed full sway, would make every human being perfect. Although the Fates often mar, they can not destroy life. But they give the impulse, which hurries man to his own ruin.

"It is woman, who ever battles with the Fates,—who forever holds them at bay, and often renders them powerless. Men, blind to their own welfare, and as if intent on their own destruction, rush on,—and heed not woman's cry of warning. But women are ever on the alert, and often save men in spite of themselves.

"That which is the intuitive sense,—which women alone possess,—is the greater light, which shines for them alone, and shows them the pathway that will lead to contentment; but not to immortality, which is so longed for.

"The cause of life, will never be known.

"In the search for it, man lost his happiness upon earth. The portals of life and of death,

are sealed to all human eyes; and will be forever.

"Now, my thoughts become confused. Give me The Written Leaves. It may be that the words have returned. I see that they have not. I can remember no more."

They all remained quiet for some moments. Fortunatus examined The Written Leaves again. He held them in this light, and in that, and at last laid them down; and, still looking at them, became immersed in thought. At last he spoke.

"There is but one thing more singular, than the disappearance of the writing; for that may be accounted for in many ways. It is the fact, that we all give a different version of it. And yet, we all read the same Written Leaves. It is a question, whether the paper was so sensitive, that our own thoughts became imprinted upon it, and appeared as written words. And now that we are all together, perhaps our conflicting minds, render the pages blank.

"It is but a supposition, to be sure. Yet

now, I am impressed with a sense of loss, that I never felt before; and the air is heavy."

Sappho—Nay Uncle, you have lost nothing that you can not more than replace. They were mere words, which the atmosphere has caused to disappear. Come, let us go. I am in haste to be gone from this room.

And followed by Fortunatus, Sappho left the room. But Apollo still lingered.

He raised the Leaves from The Book of Life, to look once more upon them, when lo! they shattered in his hands; and the fragments fluttering down, were scattered around him. Ere he could recover from his surprise, he heard Sappho calling.

He turned out the light, but stood still for a moment, for he felt impelled to step backward into the gloom. As he hesitated, Sappho came into the hall, holding above her head a lamp, while with the other she shaded her eyes. In a low voice, that had in it a cadence of fear, she called Apollo.

He was soon by her side. Sappho drew a sigh of relief, as she said: "Why did you remain so long?"

Apollo smiled, and took the lamp from her hand, saying: "Come, and look once more at The Written Leaves."

They entered the room hand in hand. When Sappho saw The Written Leaves in fragments, she clasped her hands, saying: "Apollo, what have you done? Destroyed The Written Leaves!"

Apollo—I, Sappho? No. I would not for the world have marred one of them. When you left the room, I took them from the table, for one last look; when they fell to pieces in my hands, and, as if imbued with life, they fluttered downward to the floor.

Sappho—Alas! my hopes are all gone.

Suddenly a door opened. Amid the torrent of rain, gleamed the lightning. The hurrying wind, rushed into the room, caught up the fragments of The Written Leaves,—and eddying,

wafted them into the night; before Dr. Faustus, who was entering, could close the door.

Faustus—Ah! it is midnight. I come late, but this is my first moment of leisure. Fortunatus scribbled me a note, asking me to come, and to see some wonderful writings which he had found. Where is Fortunatus? And where are "The Written Leaves," as he styles them?

Sappho—You come too late to see them. As you entered, the wind carried them away.

Faustus—Indeed! Perhaps you will soon tell me, that Fortunatus has also flown. I suppose that I can at least, see him.

They arose with one accord, and went to seek Fortunatus.

The fire had been replenished. Fortunatus sat before its genial blaze.

He was no longer the Fortunatus who in the library had sought knowledge from The Written Leaves. He looked as if he were master of the world, and that all of its laws were at his command; and that, in his benevolence, he suf-

fered weak humanity to exist. He greeted Dr. Faustus kindly; and on inquiry, related all the circumstances connected with the discovery of The Written Leaves, but without immediate comment. Neither did he take part in the discussion that followed. But when Apollo told of their destruction and final disappearance, he said: "So, they were perhaps chemically prepared. It is now too late, to attempt to penetrate the mystery. The Written Leaves are gone, and can not be subjected to analysis."

Apollo—No analysis, could account for the fact, that each one of us gave a different version.

Fortunatus—That is true. So, no opinion can be confirmed. But the little glimpses that come to us from an unknown source, should not be allowed to weigh too much; nor, in fact, be given any importance, until analyzed. It is reason that must destroy our illusions.

Faustus—But reason itself, is but an illusion to mortals. What to them seems true on one day, on the next they deride. Our very souls

are not our own. They are played upon, and buffeted about; first by good, and then by evil Spirits,—as we term them.

"Where is the man who can call his soul his own? He may dedicate it to Religion, and find but vapory visions, which are forever fleeing. And he must beware how he follows them to their abiding place, lest he find them false. He seeks the aid of Science, to unravel the mystery; and finds it of the earth, earthy. He may analyze all things, and separate them into atoms; and of not one particle of Soul, is there a trace.

"Ah! the Soul is a 'Will-o'-the-wisp'—ever in darkness, forever flitting in the dismal swamp."

As Faustus spoke, his ruddy cheek paled, and his dark eyes gleamed with what seemed a troubled light; and as he went on, his face expressed the scorn, and the disdain of a proud spirit, that had been baffled in its pursuits.

But his face in repose, revealed only the highly

intellectual man, who despised the weaknesses of humanity.

His hair was inky black, as also were his eyes; and when he looked at any one suddenly, the effect was almost electrical. He was quick in motion and in speech; and yet he always produced the impression, that he held his power in reserve. To those who were his intellectual equals, he was a pleasant companion.

Fortunatus turned to Faustus, with a benevolent smile, and said: "Faustus, my friend, I wish that you could have read The Written Leaves. They would have calmed your turbulent spirit, and have brought you peace.

"Since I have read them, I have become conscious of the futility of all discussions upon the existence of the Soul. Future generations will regard them with surprise, as we do the search for the Philosopher's Stone.

"If we do our duty in the present, it will not be long before the mind of man will become stronger, and reason will reign supreme in all.

"But the people must beware of the past. They can gain but little knowledge there.

"I repeat what I said to-day at the Club. The Influence of History upon Civilization, may be deleterious, and impede advancement.

"This, Faustus, is the conclusion of the whole matter—and it is late. See, the hand of Time has run past the hour of twelve, and the first day of the Year 1893, has passed away."

THE CHRISTMAS CARD.

THE CHRISTMAS CARD.

CHAPTER I.

"Christmas is coming, Christmas is coming. Do you not hear the bells ringing? jingling most merrily?

"On Christmas Eve the bells were rung,
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung"—

and the speaker paused.

Before the bright fire stood Christabel, a pretty miss of eighteen winters. She looked as if she had come from the Northland. A lithe blonde. Hair of gold hung in heavy braids below her waist. Her forehead low, brows straight. Eyes of steely blue, that gazed at the bright fire undauntedly. Features, clear cut. Her cheeks and lips, as pink as coral. Straight and erect she stood, her

hands clasped before her. She looked not at her companion, but into the fire, as she continued: "Do you hear the bells chiming, Mary?"

"Yes. They once more herald to the world, the message, 'Peace and goodwill unto men.'" The speaker had answered slowly, as if her thoughts were far off. Her voice was rich and low. She leaned back in her chair, her eyes looking into space. Large black eyes, with brows most delicately arched. Her raven hair was coiled high upon her head, and rippled back from her forehead and temples. Her elbows rested on the arms of her chair, and her hands were brought together, the finger tips slightly touching, and showing the rosy palms. Beautiful hands! They were most exquisitely molded, the fingers long and tapering.

The two companions became silent. Each busy with her own thoughts, and listening to the merry Christmas bells ringing.

Christabel again spoke:

"O, those Christmas bells! When I hear them clanging in the frosty air, I wish that I was a child again, with all of that delightful feeling of expectancy and uncertainty. When I used to hear the bells ringing, and the wind sweeping along, I would see Old Santa Claus riding through the air, and covered with snow. And I would listen to the wind whistle down the chimney, and every moment hope that he would descend. In the morning each present held a magical value. It is strange, Mary, how we cling to the unknowable:

"Could those days but come again,
With their thorns and flowers.
I would give the hope of years,
For those bygone hours."

Mary—Now the bells cease their joyous pealing, and one by one they strike farewell to Christmas Eve. The Star of Bethlehem has arisen. A new Christ will come to say, "Peace and goodwill unto men." And will men heed?

Christabel—No, Mary, no. 'T is an idle question. Christmas is for children, not for men.

Mary—Once, Christabel, they were all children. Will they remember to-night their children, and bring them gifts in memory that Christ did come?

Christabel—No, Mary, no. But the mothers will. There is not a mother in Christendom, that has not told her little lisping babe, that Santa Claus comes to-night. Not a mother, that has not for the whole year, with pleasure, led her children to believe in the old story; and joyed in the signs of their innocent belief. When the time comes that she must break the spell, with what tender solicitude does she lead them to other joys: and teach them to give, even as they have received. Mothers make Christmas.

Mary—But to-morrow morning, Christabel, when the Christmas bells do ring, and the altars are bedecked with flowers,—and joyous songs are sung.—When the minister invokes a

blessing, and tells how Christ came as an innocent babe to earth to save men :—will people not pause,—and think ?

Christabel turned quickly, and looked at her friend, and smiled when she saw her gazing into space : " Think, Mary, think what ?"

Mary—Think of their own lives,—of the misery of the world.

Christabel—No. Such thoughts will not flit across their minds. People leave the misery of the world in the hands of God, my Mary. Consider, for one instant, our fashionable audiences, our eloquent pastor, and then cast the eye away back, and beside the Sea of Galilee ; where Christ did preach to a motley crowd, and teach to them that they had souls.

Mary—To-day, Christabel, the souls of men are asleep. Would that they could be awakened. Would that I had the power.

Christabel—Women have no power, my Mary. They have but souls. They can but pray, and hope.

Mary—Their hopes and prayers ascend to heaven, and seem never to be answered. Yet I will pray to-night, and ask that by to-morrow's dawn an invisible Christ may come, and wake the sleeping souls of men.

Christabel—May your prayer be granted. Good-night, my Mary. To-morrow, I will look around, and see if the souls of men are awake.

CHAPTER II.

When Christmas morning came, the ground was covered with a snow-white mantle. The streets were silent. As far as the eye could see, not a footprint marred the purity of the snow. The sun did not show his face. The air was still. Over the housetops, curled the blue smoke. For children had long ago awakened the households.

Almost the first feet to press the snow, were those of children. They stole from the houses,

and stepping into the snow, looked back to see their footprints, in delight. It was a new world to them. Soon, boys with sleds, were seen dashing down the street, rushing into the deepest drifts; sometimes pausing to fling a snowball at a companion, and then running madly on. Whither? To see the wonder of the snow-white earth.

Christmas day had begun, and all the world was astir. As the bells rang out clearly, (calling pious souls to prayer), the snow again began to fall.

Christabel had arisen late. She now stood looking out of the window, wondering where Mary had gone. Soon she saw her coming. She came in, shook the snow from her mantle, saying: "See, Christabel, I am almost a snow image."

Christabel—I would not see you in such a guise. Come to the fire quickly, that you may melt. Where did you go so early?

Mary—It is not early. I awoke at the dawn

of day, and it was so still, that I hardly realized that it was Christmas morning until I saw my gifts. When the light first shone on the Madonna, she seemed to have just alighted on the clouds, so lightly was she poised. Truly, Raphael was inspired by faith sublime, when he painted that Madonna. Such faith does not exist to-day. It was your gift, Christabel?

Christabel—Yes.

Mary—I thought so. You must be a veritable Santa Claus to have hung it in my room without waking me.

Christabel—It was difficult. You slept so lightly, that I was almost afraid to breathe. But you only sighed.

Mary—I must have slept more heavily than is my wont. One of my gifts puzzles me exceedingly. See this blank book, inscribed with my name. I know not who sent it.

Christabel—It is handsomely bound in Russian leather. And such beautiful paper! It looks as if the book had been made especially

for you. Ah, Mary! Some one has found out that you keep a diary.

Mary—Yes, it would seem so. 'T is singular. I had decided that this next year I would not keep a journal, but that I would let my thoughts run riot. And now this beautiful book has come. I will keep it, and maybe I will change my mind. To-day, I look to see the result of my prayers and work for the past year.

Christabel—Your work has been almost incessant.

Mary—I thought it but my duty to pray, and give all my time during the year to the alleviation of human suffering. And many women all over the world have done the same. We ought by to-day, to see some evidence that our prayers have been answered.

Christabel—You can all know that your work would have produced the same results, without the intervention of prayer.

Mary—That is what I wished to know. That is the question that I have asked this morning.

Christabel—This morning?

Mary—Yes. This morning, we delivered Christmas baskets to the poor. As I supplied the wants of many of them, and gave them words of cheer, (for it is cruel to dishearten them) I wondered if it were possible for such miserable conditions to exist forever.

Christabel—You do not mean to tell me that you had the temerity to ask such a question.

Mary—Yes. When we were done, and the door was closed, and we were preparing to depart, they were all congratulating themselves. I could not say a word. Seeing that I was silent, the pastor approached me and said, that "Much of the success of the undertaking was due to my efforts." Then I asked him—'If he thought that we had succeeded in bettering the condition of humanity?" And he answered, "Certainly; that all the people that had come, had gone home happy." "But," I

urged, "That would last but a little while. What we had just done, was tangible to them, and to us, but that we had not the power to relieve them from want and misery for more than a short time. Would our prayers ever entirely relieve humanity?" And he said, that "We must rely on the Lord." Still I went on, and said "That I could see the result of my labor, but not of my prayers; and to-day I asked him and myself, of what benefit were my prayers?"

Christabel—And he did not answer?

Mary—No, he looked at me aghast. But I told him,—that for the whole year I had prayed, that sorrow might be removed from the earth,—that a greater light might dawn,—and that when we commemorated the birth of Christ, that a new light should come to the souls of men, as Christ once came to earth. When I had finished, do you know, Christabel, that he said,—"He thought that my prayers would be answered?"

Christabel—Indeed, they should be, Mary, if

prayers were ever answered in this world; but I doubt.

Mary—I know that you do; and to-day I am ready to question, if you are not right. God seems powerless to awake the souls of men; and until they are aroused, there will be great suffering. Even children will suffer.

Christabel—Children, Mary, are borne upon wings; and the weights and cares that lie so heavily upon us, are not felt by them.

Mary—But they often suffer physically, from insufficient food and raiment.

Christabel—But their little busy brains, so irresponsible, carry them above the real. They all have "Aladdin's lamp."

"When I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp:
When I could not sleep for cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain!

"Since then I have toiled night and day,
I have money and power good store,
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright,
For one that is mine no more;
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,
You gave, and may snatch again:
I have nothing 't would pain me to lose,
For I own no more castles in Spain!"

And we, Mary—we,—"own no more castles in Spain!" But come to the window, and see how changed is our outlook. The snow has covered every obstruction from view, and even now it effaces the footsteps of the people passing by. The trellis over which the rose vine runs, is hardly to be seen for the soft snow. How far away seem the houses. Each household is "Snowbound."

Mary—It is beautiful, this world of ours.

Christabel—Yes, too beautiful to allow a shadow to rest upon it. And to-day there are no shadows. 'T is a day of joy to the children. I enter a plea for Christmas. Not on account

of the legend old, but for the allegiance I owe to Santa Claus. I would not destroy Christmas.

Mary—I have not forgotten you, Christabel. Come, I will show you your gifts. (She walked across the room, and pulled aside the portiere which led into a narrow recess lighted by a window—a dainty abode for a saint.) Here I have had it hidden, so that your eye might not spy it. Here, my dear Christabel, is your Christmas gift.

Christabel—What! a book! In blue velvet! Emblazoned with a star! Here are all my favorite poems! "Longing," "The Fountain of Youth," "The Lady of the Lake"—the sweetest lay Scott ever wrote. Mary!

Mary—Yes. I took all your favorite poems and had them bound together.

Christabel—You have fulfilled my unspoken wish. It is lovely. At the last you have put "The Day is Done." (And Christabel read it aloud.) It is the gem of Longfellow's poems. I always read it with new delight.

Mary—I did not forget that it was your birth-day also. I had this pin fashioned, that you might think of me every day.

The pin was a star of frosty silver, and in the center, and at each point, sparkled a tiny diamond.

Christabel—It is an equisite jewel, Mary. I will wear it forever. (And she caught it in her blue velvet collar).

When left alone, Mary began to turn the leaves of her book, and there floated on the air, the perfume of the roses in June. When Christabel returned, she said: "Christabel, is not the room like a garden of roses?"

Christabel—Yes. Where are the roses?

Mary—I have them. (Christabel came to her side, and she went on turning the leaves.) Every page is like a rose petal. Is it not?

Christabel—It is delightful. It perfumes the whole room. I wonder who sent it?

Mary—I can not imagine (still turning the

leaves over as Christabel stood by her side. When the last page was turned, she said):

"'T is a wondrous book, Mary, but it will be priceless, when filled with your writings."

Mary—I will not mar a page with a serious thought.

Christabel—Then dedicate it to Fancy.

Mary—I will dedicate it on the New Year. It may be though, that it will remain as spotless as it is this moment. Will you not keep a diary this coming year?

Christabel—No. My thoughts are too unsettled to transfer to paper. They are always roving.

The church bells ringing merrily, Mary arose, and Christabel asked: "Will you go to church?"

Mary—Yes. I will go, and pray once more that we may see the light.

CHAPTER III.

As noonday approached, Christabel stood at the window, watching for Mary. Soon she saw her coming in company with Dr. Pliny. She seemed dejected, and was listening to her companion with little interest. In a few minutes she entered, and stood gazing into the fire, until Christabel asked, "Are you tired?"

Mary—No, Christabel. I am disappointed.

Christabel—Tell me all that transpired.

Mary—The church was beautifully decorated, as I knew it would be. The music was fine. I do not think I ever heard the choir sing with more feeling, and my hopes were aroused. (And she looked at Christabel, with eyes bedewed with tears).

Christabel—Yes, Mary. Music carries us away.

Mary—But when the sermon began, I felt lost, and as if I never could pray again.

Christabel—Was not the discourse of Dr. Pliny satisfactory?

Mary—Dr. Pliny did not speak. A stranger was in his place, and all the remarks were vague and insufficient; he seemed to have no comprehension of the subject. Every one looked as cold,—as if they all had been cut out of marble. I know not how I sustained myself until church was out. It must have been the music, that carried me along.

Christabel—My poor Mary. It was well that the service was short.

Mary—Just as I thought that I could not live another minute, he closed his discourse; and the music began. Then I felt sustained. When the service closed, all the people seemed like strangers to me. I hurried away.

Christabel—I thought that I saw Dr. Pliny come home with you.

Mary—He did. When I got to the church door he was there, and he walked home with me.

Christabel—What did he say?

Mary—I hardly listened, I was so disappointed. And now, Christabel, I think that my soul, has fallen asleep.

Christabel—No, Mary, no. How did it happen that Dr. Pliny did not preach?

Mary—He gave some reason, but I did not notice what it was. I think he said, that he would call, or write.

Christabel—There is some one at the door now. (And Christabel went, and returned with a box. It was quickly opened. In it lay a wreath of white roses. In the center was a card.) Now you have real roses, Mary. Are they not fragrant? (And they read this card together.)

"This earth is but a passing resting place. As the Swallows flit to sunnier climes across the seas,—so, some day, will all speed away: borne by the spirit invisible. 'T is well that we flee from earth. If the spirit enveloped the body, life on earth would be intolerable.

"Oft, by chance, there comes to earth, one in whom the spiritual life is transcendent. This fair flower, forever seeks to exalt humanity;—to bring the spiritual to earth. The wish is vain. The spiritual light that you see, and are surrounded by, is not visible to all; and even its very existence is not conceded.

"Would fair flower, that I could send thy spirit rest. Turn to other scenes. Give thy hand to Poesy, and she will lead thee to flowery méads, and with sweet music will attend thee. Farewell."

The Advent of the New Year.

THE ADVENT OF THE NEW YEAR.

It was the last day of the month, and December bethought himself that he would cover the earth with a snow-white mantle, as a sportive farewell. As the shades of night came on, he nodded his head, well pleased; folded his robe about him, and laid down to rest.

The wind with a gentle moan, died away. The moon arose, and shone resplendent over the snow-clad earth. Each star twinkled and blinked, and never a cloud passed over the sky.

December gone, the elements had no guide. So the Year 1892, grown old and hoary, sat him down to muse; his hands resting on the Book of Life.

"Soon I will depart. My hours are numbered. For days I have heard the people saying,—some half gleefully, some half sadly,—

'The Old Year will soon be gone. When the New Year comes, I will turn over a new leaf.'

"Fools! do they not know that it is I, who have turned the leaves of the Book of Life for them, day by day? Every day I have turned a leaf over.

"Now I lift this great Book of Life in my hands,—Zounds! how heavy it has become. Truly, I am getting old. Yet, when I first held it,—'twas as light as a bauble. I am weary of this great Book of Life, with which I am so soon to part.

"To-night, I open it once more, ere I give it into the hands of the New Year. To-night, once more, I shall see Father Time, with his book. In that book, he inscribes the deeds of men.

"To-day, once more, I have seen misguided mortals thwart the decrees of life. Deluded creatures! They think that they know,—that they are wise,—when they hurry to their own destruction.

"Again I will read the leaf, which to-day I turned in this great Book of Life.

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"'T is grand! Wonderful, that it here should be written. How much happier mortals would have been, had all been fulfilled. O, you poor Earthlings! You know not what you have missed. You are all wrapped up in your own delusions.

"Ah! Good Father Time, is it you?"

Time.—Yea, yea. It is I,—I, who have always been, and who will be forever.

Old Year.—Have you your book with you?

Time.—Yes. The book in which all read, and from which none do profit.

Old Year.—Would that man could read in the Book of Life.

Time.—Ha! What? Your Book! Why, you can but turn a leaf a day. While my book, is always open. Any day it can be read.

Old Year.—Too true. But in this great

Book, are written the decrees of life. While you,—you but inscribe the deeds of men.

Time.—Yea. I inscribe them deep, with a pen of iron, that men may read, what fools men have been. But they seldom profit by the knowledge.

Old Year.—No. That they do not. It is well that their power is limited.

Time.—All power is limited. The stupid Book which thou dost hold in thy hand, allows but one leaf to be turned in a day. Try, if thou canst turn another leaf.

Old Year.—No. To-morrow, the baby fingers of the New Year, will turn the leaf.

Time.—And to-morrow I will inscribe these blank pages. Zounds! Thy Book is no better than mine.

Old Year.—It is, indeed, better. Read the glorious promises that should have been fulfilled to-day.

* * * * * * *

Time.—And read thou, how that they were

not fulfilled. Ha, ha! Of what good were the decrees, when man could so turn and twist them, that thou canst scarce trace their semblance?

Old Year.—'T is thy cursèd book, that does the mischief. When man should advance, grow,—he takes thy book and reads,—and straightway retraces his steps.

Time.—How by all thy conscience,—how can man retrace his steps? He lives but "three score and ten," then vanishes, and is replaced by others.

Old Year.—Even so he does. But those who come after, and read thy book, endeavor to follow in the footsteps there traced—to form such kingdoms and governments as have existed before; and they waste their lives in vain efforts to transplant the past into the present. Man would not perpetrate such folly, if he could read in the Book of Life.

Time.—Ha, ha. Give man thy Book to read,—and thou shalt see what a poor under-

standing he possesses. He would not be content, to turn only a leaf a day. Ah, you know not man. You have lived but a year, my sage 1892; while I,—I, have existed forever. I know poor man in all the phases of his existence. First, he would always live forever in this world. And you know that it is not written in your Book that he should.

Old Year.—No. Never.

Time.—Yet behold the folly of man. He builds for generations to come. He lays down his life for poor trifles, for mere beliefs, creeds, opinions. Look at the record.

* * * * * * *

Old Year.—Yes, yes. I see. So unnecessary. The decrees were different.

Time.—They were indeed. But what mattered the decrees, when man saw not how they were to be fulfilled?

Old Year.—Why did he not wait for them to be fulfilled? Why did he rush into the arena without sufficient thought? Why did

man read thy book, and try to force the events of the new time into old grooves, until he destroyed his happiness?

Time.—Why,—why did you not read to him from your great Book, so that he could understand,—that what has been, shall never be again? Even though he use his great force,—his powerful brain,—he can not reinstate the past. Why, thou wise, sage, 1892?

Old Year.—Because I was not so admonished. And now it is too late. See, even now, the New Year is quickly making his way towards us. And I must deliver into his hands this great Book of Life. I am loath to part with it.

Time—Even so. Thou art like unto man.

Old Year.—Not so. I would but pass it to older hands. See how young and blithe the New Year looks. 'T is a pretty sprite. Tell me, good Father Time, was I ever so young?

Time.—Yes. When first I saw thee, picking thy way along, just so daintily.

Old Year.—What! And I knew thee not?

Time.—No. The young know not, see not, care not,—for time.

Old Year.—'T is a pity. If thou hadst but have spoken to me, and admonished me. Ah! How different it would have been for these poor mortals.

Time.—See, my hand does not point to the figure twelve, for some minutes. Admonish thou the New Year, ere he takes the Book.

Old Year.—I will. I will. Come hither, thou cherub of a New Year.

New Year.—Thou art the Old Year?

Old Year.—I am.

New Year.—Then joyfully I come. Quickly pass me the Book of Life, and depart.

Old Year.—Not so fast, boy. This is the great Book of Life.

New Year.—I know it. You tell me what I know. Give me the Book.

Old Year.—Listen. In it is written—

New Year.—I can read what is written therein. Give me the Book.

Old Year.—And when thou readest—read slowly, and ponder the deep meaning; so that each decree may be impressed by thee upon the consciousness of man, in order that he may not be puffed up in his own folly, and seek to subvert the decrees of life.

New Year.—Cease thy prattling, thou hoary head, and give me the Book.

Old Year.—Nay, nay, thou youngster, listen. These decrees are important. They should lead the march of humanity. So, when thou readest thou must not be in haste, and mingle the words so that the meaning is not caught, and does not impress the mind of man. Dost heed?

New Year.—Give me the Book. Thy trembling hands can hardly hold it.

Old Year.—When thou hast the Book, thou wilt have no light burden. It will weigh thee down, and make thee old and hoary, even as I. Is that not true, Father Time?

New Year.—What? Time, Father Time? I

see him not. I know not such a one, as Time.

Old Year.—What! See you not Time, good Father Time? He has just passed by thee.

Time.—Even as I told you, sage 1892,—the young know not, heed not time, until they miss it.

New Year.—Quickly give me the Book. Hear! They are ringing the bells to welcome me, and I have not the Book.

Old Year.—Not so fast. The bells are chiming a sad farewell to me, as I depart. To-morrow, you will often be called, 1892. I will not soon be forgotten.

New Year.—Cease thy talk. I care not if thou art forgotten, or remembered. Give me the Book of Life.

Old Year.—When thou hast it, thou wilt not be so blithe. It is heavy. Ah, good Father Time, dost thou point to the figure twelve? Now I pass to the New Year this great Book of Life. Farewell, a long farewell.

New Year.—Why, the Book is as light as a feather. Farewell.

And merrily the bells did chime, as the New Year gaily started on his career.

CLEOPATRA IN HADES.

CLEOPATRA IN HADES.

In the Scientific American of July 21, 1888; appeared the following paragraph, on "The Death of Cleopatra." "Dr. Viaud Grand-Mariis, of Nantes has been holding an inquest on the sudden death of Cleopatra. He rejects the theory that her death was caused by the bite of a viper. She was accustomed to test the effect of various poisons on her slaves, in order to ascertain which caused the easiest death. Having shown that no viper was found in the room of the fair suicide, that her body presented no traces of bites, and that her two maid-servants were found dead or dying at the foot of her bed, he comes to the conclusion that her death was caused by 'Carbonic Oxide.' Bulletin General de Therapeutic."

After reading the above late in the evening,

I thought that if I were a Theosophist, I would hie me to Hades, present a copy of The Scientific American to Cleopatra, and hear her opinion upon the diagnosis rendered. I know not if my wishes gave me the power to carry out my intentions, or if in my sleep, came this vision.

[Scene in Hades.—Cleopatra seated beneath a canopy of roses, sipping nectar. On one side of her stands Charmian. On the other side, Iras kneels to receive the cup. Cleopatra with a sigh passes the cup to Iras, and turning to Charmian, addresses her.] "Good Charmian, time hangs heavily. Where is Marc Antony, that the slave kneels not at my feet?—And Caesar, that he pays not court to me? Think they that I would be more neglected than when upon the Earth?

"Think of it Charmian, the base Antony killed himself,—not for me. He fell upon his sword because he had lost a paltry battle, and feared to face Octavius Caesar. Even then fear clung to him. Death not coming quickly, he

called upon me to shelter him; and I,—weak in woman's compassion, sought to save him.

"Good Charmian,—Iras,—do you remember how we pulled at the ropes? How our weak hands became strong, as we bore the weight of the mighty warrior?

"Think you Charmian, that I would have gone to my death so readily, and have taken you both with me, had I known the truth? No.—I would have remained upon the Earth, and have fooled Octavius Caesar to the top of his bent.

"Now we can smile and take pleasure, in recalling what seemed so serious then, although we know that it was all for naught.

[Enter Octavia.] "Here comes Octavia, my friend, whom I revere. Think you Charmian, that we would have been such friends had we met upon the Earth?

[Cleopatra greets Octavia.] "Octavia, most welcome. Recline beneath the roses.

"Octavia, a panorama of the past has glided before me."

[Octavia.]—Ah! Even in this charmed sphere, doth memory play you such tricks?

[Cleopatra.]—I questioned Charmian as you came, as to whether, if you and I had met upon Earth, we would have been such friend. Would you have been the companion of my soul, then, as now?

[Octavia.]—Yea, that would I, if Marc Antony had not crossed our paths. Wonder rather, at the tolerance I showed Antony. Neglected, deserted, and at last homeless; I thought always of his welfare, his honor, his fame. Ever forgetting my own. But now it is passed. We will not repine.

[Cleopatra.]—No. That would be useless. See! There comes the base Antony, with Caesar, Octavius Caesar, Pompey, and their suits.

[They enter, Julius Caesar in advance.]

[Julius Caesar.]—All hail! Do I behold the

queens, with clouds of earth upon their brows? Behold, the light of pleasure softly plays around you, and yet you stoop to earth!

[Octavia.]—Old memories hang around us. Cleopatra summoned them from earth, and they obeyed her royal mandate.

[Caesar.]—Remember, Cleopatra, that you are queen no more; nor am I the great Caesar. Unless it be that I play at Comedy, to be within your sphere.

Ah! It is true, that the Earth is no more for us, yet we sigh for it. But stay, I will be again Caesar, the conqueror. Cleopatra once more sways the scepter over Egypt. I kneel at her feet.

[He kneels, casting down his eyes; sees a paper, takes it and rises.]

[Caesar.]—Here is a message for the royal queen. May I dare to read it to Cleopatra, the star of Egypt? It comes from the Earth, perhaps some vassal petitions for his head.

[Cleopatra.]—Oh! It is joy to reign again.

[She rises and plucks a rose.]—Here is my scepter. This lovely rose, more beautiful than all jeweled scepters. Kneel, that you may inhale its perfume.

[Caesar kneels again, and she lightly touches him with the rose.]

[Cleopatra.]—Let the great Caesar rise, and read the petition.

[Caesar reads.]—The Death of Cleopatra.

[Cleopatra.]—They still remember me; read on.

[When Caesar has completed the reading, Cleopatra takes the paper from his hand, gazes at it with scorn, and exclaims.]

"This it is to have reigned upon the Earth! Centuries, and centuries have passed. The very name of Ptolemy is a dead letter, and yet,—You hear what a mortal has said, at this late day!

"Well do you know Octavius Caesar, that Proculius found me arrayed in my royal robes, the asp in venom, still clinging to my arm; as

I lay in my last sleep. Iras slumbering at my feet to awake no more upon the Earth."

[Octavius Caesar.]—It was as you say. Charmian was still arranging the diadem upon your lifeless brow, and when Proculius asked,—"Was this well done Charmian?" she replied—"Yes, Roman, it was well done, for such a death became so great a queen."—then sinking down, she followed you to this realm unknown to mortals.

[Cleopatra.]—Yea! Too true! It was as you have said. It was my crown of glory; and now, it has been snatched from my brow. What honor is left to me upon the Earth, now that the very annals of history have been destroyed?

What race of men think you Caesar, inhabits the Earth, that they can so occupy their time?

[Caesar.]—They are but mortals, striving to determine the course of their lives.

[Cleopatra.]—Think you that they advance,—

that they have become more perfect people,—than those who lived on earth so long ago?

[Caesar.]—It is a question. In those days the people marched on to glory. We lived our great thoughts, in great deeds of conquest; and they were heralded over the world.

We received our recompense, and were honored by our fellow men, without delay. If the fates were unkind, we took our lives in our own hands.

Our Philosophy was our solace, and our legacy to mankind; only too soon to be neglected.

Now, from time to time, we see great men pass by, who on the Earth have lived unhonored; and the world knew not of their greatness, until they were gone.

[Octavia.]—Such a race should be pitied. Be comforted Cleopatra, the paper you hold in your hand, is but the work of a poor mortal. Look rather in compassion upon him. It is a mark of the deterioration of mankind.

They grope in darkness, are forever stepping backward into the past, seeking the origin of the universe.

If they could retrace step by step the manifold paths of the past, their minds would become blank, and the world to them would be a chaos.

Come, let us banish the visions of Earth."

At these words they faded from sight, and their voices were heard no more.

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